

# The Alpha and the Mistake

## Mistake - 6

Ryder

I stopped my walk around Brook's room to examine one of the pictures. Unable to help myself, I picked it up. A younger version of Brook sat with what had to be her dad in front of an enormous cake with several candles. They both had big grins on their faces. Her dad looked like someone mine would've gotten along with.

"Don't you dare," Brook said, her voice angry and sharp. I looked over at her, confused. "Say what you want about me, but don't you dare badmouth my dad."

I set down the picture. "I wasn't. The only thing I thought of saying is you two look a lot alike. He seems pretty cool." I sighed and ran a hand through my hair. "Brook, I know it didn't seem like it yesterday, but I'm not like Mike. I don't enjoy making a show of how badass I am by picking on those weaker than me."

"You're right. It didn't seem like that at all," she snapped and it took all I could to not flinch.

I ran my hand through my hair again, disappointed that she was right. "I'm not my own person right now. I have to stay on Mike and his dad's good side. There is too much riding on my stay here but if I could have done what I wanted, then yesterday would've gone a lot differently."

Her brows furrowed as she looked at me. "Would it now, and how would've it gone if you had your say?" Before I could say a word Brook held up her hand. "Actually, forget that. It's none of my business. I will just take your word for it." Her body relaxed, and she shrugged with an air of nonchalance. "After all, here you are paying me a visit when no one has dared to even speak to me. That is if you've heard of Mike's rule about me?"

"Yeah, he mentioned it a few times."

"Right. That already says a lot about you. You're suicidal for starters. Mike will find out and when he does, the dude would seriously have kittens."

The image of that popped into my head, making me chuckle. I'd pay money to see that. Becoming more serious, I told her. "Some things are worth the risk."

Again, Brook looked at me as if I'd grown two heads. "And there you go right back into what the hell does that mean territory. Dean, this may be difficult for you, but can you please not talk in riddles?"

“Sorry, I don’t mean to,” I said with a wince. How could I explain this without freaking her out? “It’s just…” I scratched the back of my head. Damn, this was hard.

Her expression suddenly changed to one of understanding. “Ah, is this werewolf stuff? It’s werewolf stuff, isn’t it? And that means it’s none of my business.”

What? “No… well… yes, it’s werewolf stuff, but —”

“Dean, just do what you got to do. All I ask is you keep me and my family out of it, please.”

Irritation filled me. It was stupid, but I hated she called me Dean. I wanted to hear her say my name. Also, she didn’t understand and wasn’t letting me explain myself. Was this really how her life was with my uncle’s pack? Everything confusing and not explained because it was ‘werewolf’ stuff? That would explain a lot. I would have to be patient for now. At least we were talking. I decided to change the subject. “So your mom knows nothing about Mike and this whole Missy Mistake thing?”

She shook her head.

“Why?”

“Why do you want to know?”

“Because I’d like to get to know you more,” I told her.

“Why?”

I leveled her with my best ‘I’m serious’ stare. “Will you humor me, Brook?”

She gave me that odd look again and shook her head. “Okay. Fine. When my dad died, Mom took it hard, like hardly eating, a shell of a person kind of hard. Harry was the only thing that made her happy again. If Mom found out… I can’t risk that changing. She can’t go back to how she was before.”

Man, that was… my mate was amazing! But also damn. She was putting up with all this for her mom? “Wow. It’s pretty awesome you’re willing to do that for her, but what about you? I don’t think she would like what her happiness is costing you. ”

She looked down at her hands, the guilt obvious, then looked back up at me, now determined. “Which is why I don’t tell her. If she broke again, I know this time I’d lose her for sure. So please don’t get involved. This isn’t your problem.”

“Yes, it is. You’re —” I started to say, and she looked at me expectantly. God, I wanted to tell her so badly, but I didn’t think she was ready, so instead, I said, “You need to think about yourself, Brook. You can’t live like this forever. One day Mike will go too far. Hell, I’m surprised he hasn’t already.”

Her lips pressed together as she looked at me. “Dean, I tried to be nice. Now I’ll be blunt. I’m not your friend, nor are you mine. I’m not your good deed for the month and I can take care of myself; have been for a long time. I got a plan. I don’t need your help, nor do I want it. What I want is for you to leave. I got a lot of homework.”

Man, never in my life had I wanted to scream so much. Why wouldn’t she at least let me help her? Maybe I just needed to give her some time to see that I was real. “Alright, but this isn’t over. What’s happening to you is wrong and I’m going to fix it. I promise.” Before Brook could say anything, I left. She needed time, fine. I would give her time, but I would not let Mike keep hurting her.